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MAINTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

RIGHTS OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION

HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

Letter dated 15 July 1994 from the Permanent Representatives of India and the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit herewith the text, in English and Russian, of the Moscow Declaration on the Protection of the Interests of Pluralistic States, signed on 30 June 1994 by B. N. Yeltsin, the President of the Russian Federation, and P. V. Narasimha Rao, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India (see annex).

We should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under items 72, 98 and 104 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) M. H. ANSARI
Permanent Representative of
the Republic of India to the
United Nations

(Signed) Y. VORONTSOV
Permanent Representative of
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United Nations

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ANNEX

Moscow Declaration on the Protection of the Interests of Pluralistic States, signed in Moscow on 30 June 1994

[Original: English and Russian]

1. The eve of the twenty-first century is witness to far-reaching historic changes that are destined to transform the world for present and future generations.

2. The end of the cold war has opened prospects for attaining global security and stability, and has offered both opportunities and challenges for fruitful cooperation among States.

3. Internationally accepted standards of democracy and the rule of law are perceived by an increasing number of States as basic components of their political systems and a reliable guarantee for the promotion and protection of human rights.

4. Governments are becoming increasingly aware that economic reforms and integration into the world economy, on the basis of equal rights and responsibilities, are prerequisites for the progress of all States.

5. However, tension and violence still persist in the world. As ideological and other barriers to mutually beneficial cooperation are being overcome, new challenges to security and stability are emerging. In particular, there is a growing threat from the forces of aggressive nationalism, religious and political extremism, terrorism and separatism, which strike at the unity of pluralistic States.

6. India and Russia, being among the largest multi-ethnic, multilingual and multi-religious States, recognize their responsibility for opposing threats to democracy and peace together with other members of the world community. They believe that the experience accumulated by them in governing their societies on the basis of their commitment to unity in diversity can make a valuable contribution in this respect. They are convinced that the guiding principles of every democratic society, such as equality, rule of law, observance of human rights, freedom of choice and tolerance, should be equally applicable to international relations. These must be based on respect for the sovereignty, equality and territorial integrity of States, non-interference in their internal affairs and peaceful coexistence.

7. Exercising their right to self-determination, the peoples of India and Russia have established by law sovereign and free States. Throughout the territories of their respective countries, the will of the people and the realization of their historic destiny are expressed through participation in the process of representative democracy.

8. The different religions that coexist in India and Russia enrich the spiritual values of societies and of world civilization. The right to profess, practise or promote any religion is guaranteed by the Constitutions of the two countries and is characteristic of their everyday life. Claims to religious exclusivism are a threat to the exercise of that right and lead to extremism and intolerance both within States and internationally.

9. India and Russia are determined to protect the cultural and religious diversity of their societies from these dangers. They firmly declare that it is inadmissible to arouse inter-ethnic and inter-religious hatred or to promote aggressive nationalism and religious fanaticism.

10. Both countries are convinced that destabilization of relations between ethnic or religious groups, efforts forcibly to displace them, ethnic cleansing and the promotion of internal and transborder terrorism, motivated by vested interests, lead to annihilation of all the positive and constructive elements accumulated by mankind during the many thousands of years of its existence.

11. India and Russia are convinced that large multi-ethnic States bear a special responsibility for the destiny of hundreds of millions of people. They advocate unconditional observance of the principles of respect for territorial integrity and unity of the State as a key factor of viability of multi-ethnic States. They reiterate their support for each other's territorial integrity as constituted by law and enshrined in their respective Constitutions.

12. India welcomes the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the various agreements on cooperation signed within that framework, including the Declaration on Respect of Sovereignty, Territorial Integrity and Inviolability of Frontiers of the States of the Commonwealth of Independent States, of 14 April 1994. It appreciates Russia's efforts towards promoting the spirit of good-neighbourliness and cooperation among States of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

13. India understands Russia's concerns that all people residing in the territories of the former Soviet Union should have equal protection before law and the safeguarding of their fundamental human rights as guaranteed in democratic societies.

14. Russia appreciates the efforts made by the Government and people of India to strengthen social harmony, promote the development of the country and preserve the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country. It supports India's actions to create an atmosphere of confidence in South Asia and to promote good neighbourliness and cooperation between the States of the region.

15. India and Russia agree to exchange experience in nation-building, including in addressing the need for decentralization without impairing the integrity and unity of their States.

16. India and Russia believe that the successful development of multi-ethnic, multi-religious States promotes international peace and stability. They, therefore, urge other members of the international community and international and regional organizations to respect the integrity of these States.

P. V. Narasimha RAO
Prime Minister of the
Republic of India

Boris N. YELTSIN
President of the
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